II. Statistical Background of the Puerto Rican Communities in New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico was colonialized first by Spain in 1493 and then by the United States in 1898, after a short period of autonomy. The migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States began in the early 1900's and has continued since, with the greatest rate ocurring in the 1950's and 1960's. Presently there are two and a half million Puerto Ricans in the continental U.S. and nearly three million in Puerto Rico. There are [redacted] nearly one and a half million [illegible] of us in New York [redacted] comprising [redacted] 60% of the hispanic population there.

There are over 300,000 Puerto Ricans in New Jersey of which 55,000 live in Newark comprising nearly 15% of the total population in Newark. (1) In a study done in 1971 by the U.S. Department of Labor it was stated that "Puerto Ricans were the most deprived of all the workers residing in the city's major poverty areas." They were far more likely than others to be unemployed or to hold lower paying jobs.(2) The average P.R. 25 years or older had an 8th grade education or less. Lower

educational attainment, unfavorable occupational attachments and concentrations in industries with large seasonal fluctuations combined to make for high unemployment among P.R. workers. Nearly 10% were jobless, which was almost 3 times the rate for the city's white workers and twice the rate for black workers. More than half of the 19,000 men surveyed made less than $100 a week. 50% of all the P.R. families had incomes of less than $ 5,000 a year.[(3] Nearly 33% of the P.R. families in the study were below the poverty line. While

the same figure for all the other families in N.Y. City was only 11%.

A [redacted] study done in Newark in 1976 by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found that 35% of the P.R. families in Newark were below the poverty line. (4)

Another study by Dr. Hidalgo states that the majority of the P.R. [redacted] are in the unskilled or marginally skilled poor class. They have been pushed to the U.S. by the extreme poverty and lack of opportunity in P.R. They were neither invited here nor wanted. They are unfamiliar with the system, fearful of the establishment

and non-competitive. They represent generations which have been marooned in economic poverty. (5)

Puerto Rico is the fourth largest market in the world for U.S. products. P.R. has a per capita income of over $1,234 a year. It has over 500,000 cars and it exports over $1.1 billion and imports over $1.6 billion a year. Business with the U.S. has multiplied by fourteen since 1940. (6) Yet over 75% of ~~[illegible]~~ the families in Puerto Rico receive "mantengo" and food coupons it was recently reported. Thefts in P.R. jumped 56% in four years and police

attributes at least half of this type of crime to addicts. Puerto Rico's present status has been characterized as a "perfumed colony" [7] and to many of us that is the root cause of alienation within the Puerto Rican nation.

III Alienation and Colonialism.

Renate Zahar states in her book that "the alienation produced by colonialism is twofold. While in capitalism the exploitation is developed within the sphere of the production and is apparently equivalent to interchange, the colonialized is exploited twice: by the colonialist

in the relationships of production and by the metropolis in the relationships of interchange. Through this mechanism, the superiority of the colonialists, manifested with brutal violence, is accepted by the oppressed as a result of a process of alienation." According to Zaher the victim eventually gets to hate himself and suffers high rates of psychosomatic illnesses and criminality as demonstrated by the studies conducted by Franz Fanon (8).

I believe that the effects of colonialism and alienation are exhibited in many forms.

For us alienation often begins
at birth in a hospital where a nurse
~~may~~ insists in calling a Puerto Rican child
John instead of Juan. If that
child grows up and begins to watch
television he is alienated by
the programming which is ~~mostly~~
not culturally relevant or
presents P.R. families in demeaning
roles. Alienation in the schools
? comes next. One of the studies found that 79% of the Puerto Rican students feel that the
teachers dislike black and Puerto Rican
(9) p. 24 Hidalgo children. (9) This inevitably
leads to a high cumulative dropout rate

as demostrated by a study done in Chicago. the study found that 71 % of all the P.R. students surveyed dropped out (actually pushed-out) of the schools with 12.5 % dropping out before starting high school. (10)

(10) P.R. Curriculum Campos p. 22

This in turn leads to other problems such as high unemployment, continued poverty, drug addiction and others. For instance, a study done in 1964 found "a high correlation among high levels of drug abuse, low levels of education, and high levels of family breakdown." (11)

(11) Fitzpatrick p. 170

Another study done between 1966 and 1967 found that while the unemployment rate in the U.S. was 11 % for persons 16-19 years old

the same rate for juveniles in Puerto Rico was 30.9%. This study also found that in 1960 92% of the males in Puerto Rico 14-19 years old were not attending school while the comparable figure for U.S. males was 46%. (12) [redacted]

(12) J.D. in P.R. p. 120-121

Housing is another area which creates alienation. In P.R. over 40% of the houses in the cities are inadequate, and in the Martin Pena slums 71,000 people live in 14,000 "houses" with a concurrent highest rates of infant mortality, tuberculosis, pneumonia and delinquency. (13)

(13) Kal p. 172-3

Dr. Hidalgo found that our people live in the worst housing available and more than half of the interviewed families lacked basic facilities. (14) Many of our people have to suffer winters without heat or hot water, living with roaches and rats as "neighbors."

(add)

(14) Hidalgo p. 34

in New York

(15)

down

houses occupied by our people

so American

so

[redacted]

and other

Dover,

during the last 10 years.

by Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans

For instance,

DR

16

which in Puerto Rico over 80% of the people vote. (16)

In 1960 P.R.s make up 15% of

but %

most

Re

in 1972 had a plan to keep

Puerto Rican

In 1970 I did a study ①
of Paterson in which I found
housing to be the most
pressing problem for Puerto
Ricans. Three factors complicated
the problem ① The city was

tearing down the buildings occupied
by P.R.s in order to make way for
two highways thus displacing
over 500 families, 80% of
whom were Puerto Rican
② The municipal government
was not undertaking the construction
of new housing that could be
used by our people
③ The migration of Puerto Ricans

to Paterson was continuing with
95% of new entrants to the
school system being Puerto
Rican. The Grand Jury which
investigated the Puerto Rican
riots of 1968 recommended that
another Grand Jury be empaneled
to investigate the housing
situation there, specially the
slumlords. (15)

They can be easily manipulated

17 " [redacted] The aim was to elect

? Richard M. Nixon and not take the chance ? that Puerto Ricans would vote against him by conducting the campaign "entirely as an effort to

IV. Responses to Alienation

. responded to colonialism and alienation at individual, organizational and national levels.

The individual level responses have ranged from assimilation to the fierce advocating of socialism [redacted], from schizophrenia to Espiritismo, from drop outs to lawyers, in sum, the whole gamut.

[redacted]

For instance, there was an increase of 22% of out group marriages (an index of assimilation) of Puerto Ricans between 1949 and 1959. (18) [redacted]

Fitzpatrick p. 94

denigrate the opposition and keep the (Hispanic) electorate home, leaving them with no candidate... This [illegible] should be fairly simple to organize... With one issue — attack — an uneducated, apolitical audience, addicted to media, could be drenched with simple slogans... Far more important than organizing our support is disorganizing the opposition." (17)

This was part of the Nixon strategy even after fifty "Hispanic leaders" attended a $1,000 a-couple society dinner dance in New York and gave Nixon $50,000 for his campaign.

(17) Fitzpatrick p. 94

[redacted]

?

? ?

COINCIDENTALLY, 1959 also saw the founding of the MPI. This was followed by the founding of FEPI in 1964 and in 1971 the founding of the PSP. (18)

(18) Silen p. III-130.

The rate of schizophrenia among PRs is very high, in 1967 the rate for males was 122 per 100,000 while the same rate for the general N.Y population was only 37%. The rate for P.R. females was 84% and for females in the general N.Y population was 32% (20)

(20) Fitzpatrick p. 162

Espiritismo can help deal not only with health problems, but with love, economics and others. Besides it is more culturally acceptable and

less expensive
[redacted] than going to a psychiatrist.
Although P.R.s are predominantly Catholic, the Church has generally alienated P.R. and thus espiritismo is used because it is more personal and the medium is Puerto Rican, not Irish, Italian or German. It is interesting to note that often a person is both a Catholic and a believer in Espiritismo.
Though it is true that many of our people drop out of schools a few do stay in there and finish school in order to become doctors, teachers and lawyers who will return to the communities to help awaken and organize the "docile ones."

The organizational responses have ranged from ineffective to effective. ASPIRA was founded to deal with education and leadership development. The organization which is now operating in four states and in P.R. has helped many students enter college and become professionals. Unfortunately there is also a high drop out rate at the college level. CURA in Newark and SERA in New York were founded by P.R. persons in order to deal with drug addiction. CURA is now considered one of the best

in the Country and the leading drug free therapeutic community catering to the needs of P.R. addicts C.U.R.A now has a prevention program and will begin a program for female addicts. Unfortunately other attempts such as P.A.N.A. have not been as successful. Programs such as P.R.A.C.A, P.R.C.D.P, F.O.C.U.S, C.A.S.A have been somewhat more successful but their budgets as all of the other programs mentioned before are drawn from federal, state funds, or private foundations which often

results in serious limitations as to their ability or desire to attack the system which has put P.R.s in the position we now occupy.

The nationhood responses by Puerto Ricans to the colonialism and alienation has been threefold; [redacted] assimilationist (estadistas), schizophrenic (populares) and liberationists (independentistas).

[redacted]
The populares and the estadistas have permitted the U.S. to control over 85% of the P.R. economy. The U.S. investments

in P.R. bring in over 40% profit while investments in the U.S. yield only 10-20% profit. P.R. now has over 13% of its best land used for military bases. The populares pushed by the independentistas took over the merchant ships and the telephone company, but now the estadistas want to give it back to U S capitalists. When the independentistas have organized themselves and struggled they have often landed in prisons or in the cemetery.

On March 21, 1937, Palm Sunday, a large public demonstration to demand the liberation of the jailed Nationalists and the independence of P.R. took place. Although the mayor of Ponce had approved it, the American Governor overruled him and sent in the police who opened fire and killed 20 persons and wounded 200 more. 25,000 persons attended the funerals of those who were massacred. The independence movement in P.R. is now divided into two larger groups, PSP and PIP, and some smaller groups. But the

reality is that these groups are rather small because the Puerto Rican, here or there, sees his situation in terms of their own life history rather than in [redacted], terms of their socioeconomic position in the larger society or in the political status. P.R people see life in personalistic terms, they see some who "make it" and therefore they do not feel oppressed because if "you work hard enough you will make it." Puerto Ricans do not emphasize class solidarity or

radical ideologies aimed at the overthrow of the existing order, Puerto Ricans seem intent on promoting their own individual mobility within the present order. Because of this there is no class solidarity in Puerto Rico nor in the Puerto Rican communities here. There is a general sense of belonging to the Puerto Rican group, but few talk in terms of Puerto Rico as a nation. Few see that the problem is not us, but the system that exploits them and me.

→ over - back

As a people we are experiencing an identity crisis of great proportions. This was exemplified by the assimilationist Luis A. Ferre who said, "Puerto Rico is my fatherland, but the United States is my nation." We still have a long way to go, politically speaking.

V Alternatives for Creating Class Consciousness and Obtaining Political Power

A program of orientation aimed at the Puerto Ricans should be initiated. This effort would include establishing newspapers, by us for us conferences, house meetings, leaflets to factory workers, college students, etc. The information would point our present condition, the reasons for it and the alternatives to it. If possible, established channels of communication such as radio and T.V. stations should be used. Alliances with other groups similarly situated [redacted], such as the Blacks,

Chicanos, and Indians, must be undertaken. Groups such as Hijos de Adjuntas, Sangermenos Ausentes, baseball teams and others should be used to implement the program. [redacted]. We can not allow our people to continue to fall for the discriminatory practices employed here. We must help our people realize that Blacks, Chicanos and Indians are also in the same boat with us and that a united effort can be

more beneficial than individual efforts.

(28)

In the political arena we should do two things. First we must register our people so they can vote and have a voice. This was aptly demonstrated in Dover, New Jersey where the Puerto Rican vote made the difference in the mayoralty race in 1974.

Second, we must organize ourselves politically. We have to develope political organizations to work within the democratic and republican parties. At the same time independent political parties or organizations must be developed.

In New Jersey we already have Hispanic Democratic Committees at the state level, county level and ~~city level. There are Puerto Rican candidates for council positions and freeholder positions in [illegible]~~ Perth Amboy and Paterson. (a Puerto Rican is [illegible]) There are [illegible] Puerto Rican council members in Trenton and New York City, some assemblymen in New York and a House Representative in New York. But we can go farther and publicize our case if we become better organized.

we should not tie ourselves to the democratic party alone, but use both parties to further our goals. (25)

[redacted].

"Unions and political parties are traditional mechanisms for creating class consciousness among the proletariat; yet in Puerto Rico (and ~~the~~ I would add) both are controlled by the elite and used as a means

of garnering the support of the poor and of co-opting their most able (21) Sofa p. 108 leaders." (21) Yet we can not ignore the power of the political parties and therefore should do ~~both~~ two things at the same time; expose the ~~conditions~~ conditions and develop mechanisms to function for us within the ~~parties~~ power structure.

"Unions have been ridden by corruption, rivalry, and fragmentation, and tend to be viewed cynically by the poor, many (22) Sofa p 108 of whom do not belong to them." (22) In P.R the approach to deal with this issue has been to establish Puerto Rican unions

that often have socialistic views

to offset the "international" labor unions controlled by it's interests. This has been very effective and recently U.T.I.E.R. concluded a long strike. In the U.S we need to develop unions composed of Puerto Ricans and other minorities while at the same time more progressive unions

[redacted]

should be used as allies. Unions with high P.R.

[illegible] benefits [redacted] such as I.L.G.W.U. should be forced to become more responsive to the needs of Puerto Ricans. This can be done by ~~forcing~~ organizing Puerto Ricans to leave the I.L.G.W.U. and other unions and join unions that would work for the workers.

Selective migration to [redacted]

three key towns in New Jersey should be encouraged as a means to obtaining political power. [redacted]

[redacted] In Paterson

population is P.R 30%, Hoboken 50% and Dover 40%.

[redacted] By organizing, encouraging and assisting P.Rs from other areas to migrate to these towns we can eventually gain political, social and economic control of these areas. Hoboken should be the first target. Although it is true that the government there has forced P.R. to move out to other towns by denying

them housing in public projects and even by given them economic assistance to move, we can undo this and take over a substantial part of the Hoboken government. Basically this is what the blacks have done in Newark and the Cubans in Union City. Besides these three target towns already have in place good Puerto Rican organizations and economic enterprises such as credit unions, co-ops, businesses, service agencies. They also have some political awareness. It is important to note that home ownership by Puerto Ricans in these three target towns is high and in Dover it is estimated that 8 out of every 10 houses sold are bought by

thing is that... there does not exist (2)
any consciousness of that alienation.
A vague recognition of the
differences between the rich and
the poor is all that can be
discerned... the rest is a false
consciousness including frankly
reactionary political attitudes." (23)

Maldonado Denis in writing about
Oscar Lewis' LA VIDA and the people
from the slums therein argues that
"Restricted in their material and
spiritual development, the poor
from the slum is a being
alienated from the greater
society in which he lives, from
the fellow beings with whom he
lives, and from himself as a
human being... The gravest

VI Conclusions:

Basically, as things stand now in Puerto Rico and here, there appears to be very little support among the Puerto Ricans for a program that would bring about radical social change aimed at basic redistribution of wealth. Even though there are high rates of poverty, programs such as welfare and food stamps have effectively taken the edge out of the anger that would normally arise. Therefore the opposition to the existing order is not there because Puerto Ricans lack

the fundamental basis of proletarian consciousness in a capitalist society: a sense of oppression, an identification of the elite as the source of the oppression, and a belief that oppression can be overcome by collective action and class solidarity. Thus, I conclude that any change must begin at the grass root level with a transitional type of program and that selective migration to selected areas will be a step that will begin to address the needs of [illegible]